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ABSTRACT

After describing recent school reforms in Hawaii, this paper discusses the state's efforts to ensure greater accountability and to deal with two issues: student evaluation and the measurement of indicators used in state-by-state comparisons. During the past few years, Hawaii has been involved in many reform initiatives, including implementating school/community-based management, establishing parent-community networking centers, expanding business-school partnerships, instituting afterschool instruction, and other reforms. Hawaii's accountability system has three components: (1) the "School Status and Improvement Report" and the superintendent's summary, concerned with context, process, and school outcome indicators; (2) "Evaluation Guidance for Schools Participating in School/Community-Based Management," an analytic model stressing intermediate and long-term school improvement effects; and (3) the "Educational Assessment and Accountability; Implementation Plan (1990-1994)," a document providing useful data and analyses for policy-makers. Regarding student assessment, disagreement stems from the different emphases given to testing's multiple objectives. Using alternative measures leads to summarization problems, and establishing priorities often leads to contentions and solutions that are worse than the problems. Measuring indicators is also problematic; performance indicators seem to be a bunch of numbers looking for an argument, whether involving graduation rates or "migration" factors. Information for obtaining Hawaii's school accountability documents is provided. (MLH)

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Accountability in Hawaii
Kellet I. Min
April 6, 1991

SESSION 39.27: ACCOUNTABILITY LEGISLATION AND SCHOOL REFORM: ISSUES AND PERSPECTIVES FROM DISTRICTS AND STATES

Introduction

Thank you for attending a presentation during the lunch period. I know that hunger and accountability are a deadly combination. Indeed, the last time I did this, I heard a researcher say that if he ever died, he hoped it would be during my presentation, because the transition from life to death would be minimal.

The purpose of my presentation is to share some of Hawaii's initiatives concerning school reform and accountability. I would like to emphasize these are developmental efforts rather than finished products. It is my hope that sharing our efforts will prevent inefficient reinventions of ineffective wheels. I will greatly appreciate information on your efforts.

I know that I will not be able to cover everything we are doing. If I think I have forgotten something, I have. If I think I have not forgotten something, I have. However, let me proceed. First, I will describe school reform in Hawaii. Second, I will present accountability concerns and our efforts to cope with them. And third, I will discuss two issues from the state perspective.

School Reform

Let me turn to school reform. During the last few years, Hawaii, like other states, has been involved in many reform initiatives. Some of them include: 1) implementing School/Community-Based Management, 2) establishing parent-community net-working centers, 3) expanding business education partnerships, 4) instituting after school instruction, 5) providing additional teachers to core subjects such as language arts, math, social studies, and science, 6) offering

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foreign language in elementary schools, 7) increasing in-service training, 8) establishing an Office of Technology, and 9) planning for early education services. While all of these reforms concern accountability, you can see we will not be able to discuss all of them today. So, I will focus on one reform and discuss how accountability relates to it. The reform I have chosen is School/Community-Based Management.

Let me provide you with a brief description of Hawaii's school system. Public education in Hawaii is governed by a 13 member elected Board of Education. The Board appoints the State Superintendent. The Superintendent, in turn, selects 7 district superintendents. In short, Hawaii is a State as well as a local school system; Hawaii's State Superintendent has regulatory as well as operational responsibility over all 232 public schools.

In April 1989, the Hawaii State Legislature passed Act 366, School/Community-Based Management which authorized the Board of Education and its Superintendent to formulate policies, including criteria and procedures to implement School/Community-Based Management for all of Hawaii's public schools. The implementation of School/Community-Based Management empowers Hawaii's citizens through shared decision-making and requires the collaborative involvement of principals, teachers, support staff, parents, students, and other community members. This Legislation seems to confirm principals' beliefs that the State staff acts rationally only when all other alternatives are exhausted. In short, the legislation is a long step toward decentralizing Hawaii's centralized school system.

The School/Community-Based Management Policy and Implementation Guidelines approved by the Board of Education shifts a significant degree of decision-making authority from the State to the school. This shift is based on the belief that the most effective decisions are those made closest to the point of implementation. The Guidelines also call for increasing accountability at the school level. Educational goals, objectives, and standards established by the Board serve as the basis for evaluating each participating school.

Goals were developed through an unprecedented union, with the Governor, Legislature, and Board of Education who co-sponsored a Hawaii Education Summit. Hawaii's Education Summit followed the example of the National Education Summit at Charlottesville, Virginia. On June 15-16, 1990, students, parents, teachers, principals, as well as representatives of community organizations, business corporations, and military units crafted eight goals for Hawaii. After a summer in which objectives were developed to meet goals, the citizens gathered at a second Hawaii Education Summit and adopted 8 goals and 35 objectives titled Hawaii Goals for Education. In addition to serving as a guide for evaluation, the goals were designed to chart Hawaii's educational future.

Accountability

Let me turn to accountability. In the not-too-distant past, educators talked to legislators in the same way boys talked to girls. We said, "Trust us. Go all the way with us. Everything will be all right." What happened? Nine months later, we were in trouble. Student outcomes did not improve. So legislators now demand accountability. Hawaii's accountability efforts to determine the degree of success of school reform include three components. The first component is the School Status and Improvement Report. A major purpose of this Report is to provide the Superintendent, the Board of Education, and the public with information on the schools' efforts and successes toward improving themselves. This Report consists of three pages for each school and is prepared annually. One section of the Report arrays Context Indicators. Context Indicators are variables over which a school has little or no control and include: 1) Student Data, such as the number and percent of students who receive free lunch or reduced lunch cost, the number and percent of students who receive special education services, and the number and percent of students who are limited English speakers; 2) Staff Data such as the number of principals assigned to the school in the last 5 years and the number and percent of teachers with over

5 years of service in the school; and 3) Facilities Data such as the number of classrooms short or over in relation to student enrollment, and the number and percent of maintenance requests fulfilled.

Another section of the Report arrays Process Indicators. These include: 1) Descriptions of Major Improvement efforts, 2) Special Programs/Innovative Projects, 3) Commendations by the District Superintendent, and 4) Recommendations by the District Superintendent.

The third section of the Report arrays School Outcome Indicators. These include: 1) Student Achievement on the Stanford Achievement Test, 2) Behavioral Data such as the number and percent of student suspensions for minor offenses and serious offenses, 3) Average Daily Attendance, and 4) Awards and Recognitions. You can easily see that many things can go wrong in preparing these sections. Indeed, Murphy's Law says that if anything can go wrong, it will. For example, if it's there, you'll step on it. If it's not there it's already on your shoe. It is hypothesized that Murphy's Law is the result of some legislative body.

In addition to individual school reports, the Superintendent's Report on School Performance and Improvement in Hawaii is also prepared annually. This Report summarizes Context, Process, and Outcome data relevant to the 232 public schools in Hawaii.

A second accountability component consists of Evaluation Guidance for Schools Participating in School/Community-Based Management. As of February 1991, 43 of Hawaii's 232 schools are participating in the program. The Guidance provides schools with an analytic model which emphasizes intermediate and long-term management effects and intermediate and long-term school improvement effects. It also provides a data collection chart which assists schools to identify indicators, data collection methods, data sources, retrieval schedules, and persons responsible for retrieving data. Finally, the Guidance provides procedures which assist to gather documents, to schedule evaluation tasks, and to monitor school management activities and school improvement activities.

A third accountability component is explained in a document titled, Educational Assessment and Accountability; Implementation Plan (1990-1994). This Plan was prepared in response to Act 371, A Bill for An Act Relating to Accounting. The Plan sets forth data and analyses that are useful for decision-making by policymakers and for accounting to the public on the school system's performance. As in the previously mentioned School Status and Improvement Report, the analytic model is based on Context, Input, and Output indicators. Context indicators consist of demographic data. Input indicators reflect policies and the schooling processes such as course offerings, staff allocations, and percent of expenditures per pupil spent on overhead costs. Output indicators include performance on achievement tests, results on effective school surveys, graduation rates, freshmen grade point average at the University of Hawaii, and percent of vocational education students employed in their field of training.

In addition to arraying and analyzing data for school system accountability, the Educational Assessment and Accountability System examines data relevant to policy makers. In this connection, Context indicators involve the wealth of the state in comparison with other states; Input indicators include per pupil expenditures, per capita direct school expenditures, and percent of total state expenditures spent on public education in comparison with other states; and Output indicators include performance on achievement tests, attendance rate, and graduation rate in comparison with other states. Using these kinds of data, our document titled, "Funding Support for Public Education in Hawaii" concludes "The funding erosion has been so dramatic, the State's conduct in this matter could be described as gross neglect." It can readily be seen that this endeavor does not endear the project to some legislators. There is a rumor that Walter Cronkite said his goal was an 80 foot yacht with an 18 year old girl. Mrs. Cronkite said her goal for him was an 18 foot yacht when he became 80. In other terms, this endeavor is not popular because it sharpens the differences between various persons' goals.

Issues

Let me turn to issues from the State perspective. There are many issues facing State assessment and accountability in Hawaii and it will not be possible to discuss all of them. I would like to discuss two. The first issue concerns testing student performance. Although most educators agree on the need for authentic assessment (the term seems to imply we have been engaging in non-genuine assessment), we would probably not agree on the perfect student assessment system. This disagreement stems from the different emphases given to the multiple objectives of testing. Some objectives of testing are: 1) determining students' strengths and weakness to improve their learning, 2) assisting teachers to improve and individualize teaching, 3) improving curriculum, 4) evaluating programs, 5) certifying students, and 6) accountability. Achieving these objectives call for a number of assessment methods: standardized tests, local criterion reference tests, and other performance assessments such as portfolios and demonstrations. The problem is that our knowledge is limited, our techniques fledgling, and resources inadequate. Thus, summarizing portfolio's or science performance assessments on a statewide basis is difficult at best. And, establishing priorities often leads to contentions and solutions which are worse than the problems.

The second issue is the measurement of indicators. Performance indicators seem to be a bunch of numbers running around looking for an argument. As you all know, definitions and data collection differ among the states and the Federal government. In the case of graduation rates, for example, we have had discussions with the National Center for Educational Statistics on the data in their "Wall Chart" (State Education Performance Chart, U.S. Department of Education). In particular, we have questioned their estimation of the "migration factor" used to adjust the base of ninth graders for net gains/losses from grades 9 to 12. Simply said, we find the Hawaii migration factor not credible and believe the

fault is with its estimation (School Completion and Leaver Statistics).

Summary

In summary, I have attempted to outline Hawaii's developmental attempts on school reform and accountability and to discuss a couple of issues facing us. For those who desire more specificity, I've listed our reports and documents on the back of my handout. Please indicate your interests and I'll be glad to mail them to you. This process saves me from having to bring extra suitcases to this meeting. I will also appreciate information on your efforts.

In conclusion, I believe that looking for the perfect accountability system requires great optimism. It is like looking into a dark room for a black cat that isn't there. Legislators look too, but they claim to see the cat. So, we will continue to look also. Thank you for your attention.

TO: Kellet I. Min, Ph.D.
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Please send the following:

- ☐ Act 366, School Community-Based Management
- ☐ SCBM Policy and Implementation Guidelines
- ☐ Hawaii Goals for Education
- ☐ School Status and Improvement Report
- ☐ The Superintendent's Report on School Performance and Improvement in Hawaii
- ☐ Evaluation Guidance for SCBM School Implementation
- ☐ Act 371, A Bill for an Act Relating to Accounting
- ☐ Educational Assessment and Accountability Implementation Plan
- ☐ Funding Support for Public Education in Hawaii
- ☐ School Completion and Leaver Statistics

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